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Implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016) and 2393 (2017)

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report is the forty-ninth submitted pursuant to paragraph 17 of Security Council resolution 2139 (2014), paragraph 10 of resolution 2165 (2014), paragraph 5 of resolution 2191 (2014), paragraph 5 of resolution 2258 (2015), paragraph 5 of resolution 2332 (2016) and paragraph 6 of resolution 2393 (2017), in which the Council requested the Secretary-General to report, every 30 days, on the implementation of the resolutions by all parties to the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic.

2. The information contained herein is based on data available to agencies of the United Nations system[1] and from the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and other relevant sources. Data from agencies of the United Nations system on their humanitarian deliveries have been reported for February 2018.

II. Major developments

Box 1
Key points: February 2018

1. On 24 February, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2401 (2018), by which it demanded, among other things, that all parties cease hostilities without delay and engage immediately to ensure the full and comprehensive implementation of that demand by all parties, for a durable humanitarian pause for at

[1] Input provided by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Children's Fund, the International Organization for Migration, the World Food Programme, the World Health Organization, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, the United Nations Population Fund, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Monitoring Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic, the Mine Action Service, the Department of Political Affairs and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

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least 30 consecutive days throughout the Syrian Arab Republic, to enable the safe, unimpeded and sustained delivery of humanitarian aid and services and medical evacuations of the critically sick and wounded, in accordance with applicable international law. While in some areas the conflict diminished in intensity, there has been no cessation of hostilities.

2. In eastern Ghutah, in particular, air strikes, shelling and ground offensives intensified after the adoption of the resolution and have claimed many hundreds of civilian lives. The United Nations recorded 29 attacks on health facilities. Notwithstanding the announcement by the Russian Federation of daily five-hour humanitarian pauses to allow civilians to leave through the Wafidin crossing, few did so. Shelling from eastern Ghutah into Damascus resulted in death and injuries.

3. Fighting between government forces and non-State armed opposition groups in the southern and eastern countryside of Idlib Governorate slowed in the second half of February, although civilian deaths and injuries continued to be reported. From 15 December 2017 to 10 February 2018, 385,000 internal displacements were recorded, with those displaced moving to the central and northern parts of the governorate. Fighting between the Levant Liberation Organization (Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham), which is led by Jabhat Fath al-Sham (the former Nusrah Front), and an alliance of non-State armed opposition groups known as the Syrian Liberation Front broke out on 20 February, disrupting the lives of civilians, the work of humanitarian organizations and United Nations cross-border shipments for a few days.

4. Some 20,000 civilians reportedly returned to the city of Raqqah in February, even though it is not yet considered safe to do so. The widespread presence of explosive hazards, including unexploded ordnance, landmines and improvised explosive devices, throughout the city has continued to pose a significant risk to civilians and humanitarian workers. According to partners on the ground, some 130 civilians have been killed and 658 injured in blasts since the city was retaken from Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in October 2017.

5. United Nations humanitarian assistance reached millions of people in need, including some 2 million who received food assistance through regular deliveries. Access to hard-to-reach and besieged areas remained challenging, with only one inter-agency convoy reaching a besieged location, that of Nashabiyah, in besieged eastern Ghutah, on 14 February, where it provided assistance to 7,200 people.

6. The United Nations estimates that some 2.3 million people (in December, the estimate was 2.9 million people) are now living in hard-to-reach and besieged locations in the Syrian Arab Republic, including 413,920 in eight besieged locations (in December, the figure was 417,566 people), following the removal of Bayt Jinn, in Rif Dimashq, from the list of besieged locations.

3. On 24 February, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2401 (2018), by which it demanded that all parties cease hostilities without delay; a durable pause for at least 30 consecutive days throughout the Syrian Arab Republic, to enable the safe, unimpeded and sustained delivery of humanitarian aid and services and medical evacuations of the critically sick and wounded in accordance with applicable international law; and the immediate deployment of humanitarian convoys each week, following the start of the cessation of hostilities. It also called upon all parties to lift the sieges of populated areas, including in eastern Ghutah, Yarmuk, Fu'ah and

Kafraya. The Council affirmed that the cessation of hostilities would not apply to military operations against terrorist groups and those associated with them, as designated by the Council.

4. In support of the implementation of the resolution, my Special Envoy for Syria, Staffan de Mistura, oversaw a period of intense diplomacy with the Geneva-based International Syria Support Group Humanitarian Task Force, led by his Senior Adviser, Jan Egeland, and co-chaired by the Russian Federation and the United States of America.

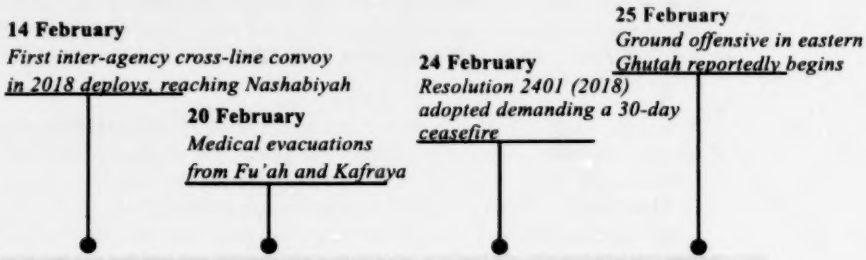
5. The adoption of the resolution and the diplomatic efforts to implement it notwithstanding, violence continued, in particular in eastern Ghutah and beyond, including in Afrin, parts of Idlib and into Damascus and its suburbs, resulting in civilian deaths, injuries and displacement and damage to civilian infrastructure, including hospitals and schools. Military activities also affected the ability of United Nations agencies and their partners to deliver life-saving humanitarian assistance.

6. In besieged eastern Ghutah, air strikes and daily shelling throughout the enclave, hitting Duma, Harasta, Ayn Tarma, Irbin, Zamalka, Saqba, Hammurah, Misraba, Mudayra, Jawbar, Jisrayn and Nashabiyah, resulted in civilian deaths and injuries and the destruction of civilian infrastructure. There were also new allegations of chlorine attacks. The annex to the present report provides a list of casualties reported by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). The United Nations recorded 29 attacks on health facilities, 14 on hospitals, 11 on health centres, 2 on ambulance stations, 1 on a psychiatric hospital and 1 on a medical warehouse. A ground offensive that intensified on 25 February resulted in the displacement of thousands towards Duma and Kafr Batna. Markets are reportedly closed, with very few shops opening and then only intermittently. Prices for basic goods remain far beyond the purchasing power of most residents, with bread costing 15 to 20 times more than in Damascus.

7. On 27 February, the three major armed opposition groups in eastern Ghutah — the Army of Islam (Jaysh al-Islam), the Rahman Corps (Faylaq al-Rahman) and Ahrar al-Sham — confirmed in writing their commitment to the implementation of resolution 2401 (2018), including ensuring humanitarian access and to expelling from eastern Ghutah all elements of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (the Levant Liberation Organization), the Nusrah Front and Al-Qaida and anyone who belonged to those groups (see S/2018/169). On 26 February, the Russian Federation announced a daily five-hour humanitarian pause, starting from 27 February, to allow civilians to leave eastern Ghutah through the Wafidin crossing. Two people were reported to have left, but some were reportedly not permitted to do so by non-State armed opposition groups inside the enclave.

8. Attacks on residential neighbourhoods of Damascus also continued from eastern Ghutah, resulting in deaths, injuries and damage to civilian infrastructure.

Figure I
Key dates in February 2018


14 February
First inter-agency cross-line convoy in 2018 deploys, reaching Nashabiyah
20 February
Medical evacuations from Fu'ah and Kafraya
24 February
Resolution 2401 (2018) adopted demanding a 30-day ceasefire
25 February
Ground offensive in eastern Ghutah reportedly begins

9. Fighting between government forces and non-State armed opposition groups in the southern and eastern countryside of Idlib Governorate slowed in the second half of February, although civilian deaths and injuries continued to be reported. From 15 December 2017 to 10 February 2018, 385,000 displacements were recorded, with those displaced moving to the central and northern parts of the governorate. Many of those who fled had already been displaced and are forced to live in makeshift camps or in the open. Formal camps are operating at up to 400 per cent of their capacity. The situation was further compounded by attacks by two non-State armed opposition groups, Ahrar al-Sham and Nur al-Din al-Zanki, forming the Syrian Liberation Front, against Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham across Idlib and western Aleppo Governorates, impeding civilian movement, delaying United Nations cross-border shipments for some days and creating a more challenging operational environment for humanitarian partners.

10. From 19 February, sniper activity and artillery shelling was reported in residential areas in the besieged towns of Fu'ah and Kafraya, Idlib Governorate. On 20 February, local sources reported that five medical cases and their family members (16 people in total) had been evacuated from the towns by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent to hospitals in government-controlled areas.

11. Turkish forces, along with Syrian non-State armed opposition groups affiliated with Operation Euphrates Shield, continued Operation Olive Branch in Afrin, Aleppo Governorate. On 20 January, the Permanent Mission of Turkey to the United Nations in New York had indicated that Turkey had "initiated a military operation on 20 January 2018 ... aimed at ensuring [the country's] border security [and] neutralizing terrorists in Afrin" (see S/2018/53). There have been reports of civilian deaths, injuries and displacement. The local authorities are also reportedly restricting movement, with most civilians not permitted to leave the district at checkpoints. Some 5,000 people have, however, been registered as displaced from Afrin district to elsewhere in Aleppo Governorate since 20 January.

12. Some 20,600 civilians reportedly returned to Raqqah in February, for an estimated total of 86,600 since October 2017. The widespread presence of explosive hazards, including unexploded ordnance, landmines and improvised explosive devices, throughout the city has continued to pose a significant risk to civilians and humanitarian workers. The systematic survey, marking and subsequent removal of those hazards are a prerequisite for the safe return of civilians and the safe delivery

of humanitarian aid. Health actors are recording an average of between 25 and 30 blast-related civilian injuries and deaths per week. The number of child victims, especially boys, is increasing as more families return. Some 130 civilians have been killed and 658 injured in blasts since the city was retaken from ISIL in October 2017. Medical and other services remain limited there, with only one maternity hospital and a health clinic operating. The lack of clean water is another serious concern. Humanitarian agencies continue to emphasize that, owing to the high prevalence of landmines, booby traps and explosive remnants of war, it is not safe for civilians to return to the city. Owing to the conditions, humanitarian organizations have only a limited presence on the ground.

13. Government forces and the Syrian Democratic Forces have continued to clash with ISIL in southern rural Dayr al-Zawr Governorate, along the eastern bank of the Euphrates and the border with Iraq, reportedly resulting in civilian casualties and small-scale displacement. Explosive hazard contamination is also a threat there, reportedly resulting in the death of 26 people during the reporting period. An estimated 325,000 people remain in need of assistance in the governorate. Priority needs include health support and water and sanitation. In the city of Dayr al-Zawr, many streets remain inaccessible owing to accumulated rubble and the risk of explosive hazards. Reportedly, more than 60 per cent of the city is damaged and shelter limited, causing inflated rents.

14. The Ministry of Defence publicly reported that government forces and their allies had conducted military operations in Aleppo, Hama, Idlib and Rif Dimashq Governorates in February.

15. The combined joint task force known as Operation Inherent Resolve (United States-led coalition) issued a statement on 8 February in which it declared:

> Syrian pro-regime forces initiated an unprovoked attack against well-established Syrian Democratic Forces headquarters on 7 February. Coalition service members in an advise, assist, and accompany capacity were co-located with SDF partners during the attack eight kilometres east of the agreed-upon Euphrates River de-confliction line. In defense of Coalition and partner forces, the Coalition conducted strikes against attacking forces to repel the act of aggression against partners engaged in the Global Coalition's defeat-Daesh mission. The Coalition remains committed to focusing on the defeat-Daesh mission in the Middle Euphrates River Valley and asserts its non-negotiable right to act in self-defence.

16. The Department of Defense of the United States also publicly reported that, in February, the coalition had carried out 135 strikes against ISIL targets in Dayr al-Zawr and Hasakah Governorates, 129 of which near Albu Kamal, Dayr al-Zawr.

Protection

17. Air and ground-based strikes continued to kill and injure civilians and to damage and destroy civilian infrastructure. Explosive weapons continued to be fired into populated areas, indiscriminately killing and injuring civilians, destroying and damaging vital infrastructure and leaving communities littered with hazards that killed and injured civilians and impeded humanitarian access. The use of improvised explosive devices in some areas added to the complexity of the explosive hazard threat. The many civilian casualties and the scale of civilian destruction remain a strong indication that violations of the fundamental rules of distinction, proportionality and precaution, and of the resulting prohibition on the launching of

indiscriminate attacks, are continuing. Children are particularly affected. The year 2017 was the deadliest for children in the country since the beginning of the conflict.

18. Fighting continued to have an impact on civilian infrastructure, including medical facilities, schools, markets and places of worship. On the basis of information received by OHCHR, civilian casualties occurred in various governorates, in possible violation of international humanitarian law. OHCHR has documented alleged incidents perpetrated by parties to the conflict, including government forces and their allies, non-State armed opposition groups and their allies and Security Council-designated terrorist groups.

19. In addition to violations documented by OHCHR, the Government provided OHCHR with information on alleged violations. The United Nations cannot verify these allegations independently. In notes verbales received on 14 and 15 February, the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic in Geneva claimed that "85 rockets [were] fired by terrorist groups on Damascus between 22 January and 12 February 2018" and that "the total number of civilian deaths was 44 and 158 civilians injured, most of them women and children". In addition, in a note verbale received on 27 February, the Permanent Mission provided a list of "shelling with mortars and missiles, and sniper attacks targeting residential areas in Damascus city, that contains numbers, locations, casualties and injuries of civilians including children in the Syrian Arab Republic which resulted from the terrorist attacks carried out by terrorist armed groups in the period from 21 to 24 February". It stated that "the total number of civilian casualties was 5 deaths and 123 civilians injured, most of them women and children".

20. Notwithstanding the call upon the Syrian authorities by the Human Rights Council in its resolutions S-18/1 and 19/22 to cooperate with OHCHR, including through the establishment of a field presence with the mandate to protect and promote human rights, OHCHR reporting remains limited, given that the Government has not granted it access to the country.

21. The United Nations and its health partners verified 41 attacks that affected health-care facilities and personnel in February, of which 29 were in the eastern Ghutah area of Rif Dimashq and 10 were in Idlib, with 1 each in Damascus and Hama Governorates. Collectively, the attacks resulted in at least 19 people killed and 28 injured, including four health workers killed and seven injured. The attacks comprised 22 incidents involving hospitals in Rif Dimashq, Idlib, Hama and Damascus, 15 involving health centres in Rif Dimashq and Idlib, 2 involving ambulance systems in Rif Dimashq, where seven ambulances were damaged, 1 involving a medical warehouse in Rif Dimashq and 1 involving a blood bank in Idlib.

22. Educational facilities also continued to suffer the impact of the fighting, with the United Nations verifying three attacks affecting schools and children. On 2 February, nine children were severely injured by unexploded ordnance at a school in the village of Judaydah al-Fadl, Rif Dimashq. On 6 February, air strikes on the Shamali neighbourhood in the village of Tarmala, south-west Idlib, hit a secondary school, causing partial damage. On 8 February, a school in Irbin, Rif Dimashq, was seriously damaged by air strikes. On 21 February, two 14-year-old boys studying at an United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) school were reportedly killed as they walked home after school as a mortar shell struck near the Jaramana refugee camp, Rif Dimashq. Two other children were reportedly injured.

Humanitarian access

Box 2
Key points

1. United Nations humanitarian agencies and partners continued to reach millions of people in need, including from within the Syrian Arab Republic. Regular programming reached more than 2 million people with food assistance through 1,744 deliveries.

2. One United Nations inter-agency convoy reached a besieged location, Nashabiyah, eastern Ghutah, on 14 February, providing assistance to 7,200 people. The total number of people reached under the plan for January-February was 7,200, or 0.8 per cent of the 844,720 people to whom access had originally been requested.

3. Cross-border assistance remains a vital part of the humanitarian response. In February, 499 trucks (17 consignments) delivered life-saving assistance to more than 1 million people in need in northern and southern areas of the country, through cross-border deliveries.

23. The delivery of humanitarian assistance to people in need remained extremely challenging in many areas as a result of active conflict, shifting conflict lines, administrative impediments and deliberate restrictions imposed on the movement of people and goods by the parties to the conflict. In particular, access by the United Nations and its partners to people living in besieged and hard-to-reach locations remained a critical concern. Bureaucratic impediments, such as the non-issuance of facilitation letters by the Government, remained a significant factor in delays or non-deliveries, the creation of a tripartite coordination mechanism to tackle such problems notwithstanding. The most recent meeting of the mechanism was held in 12 December 2017, at which time there was no breakthrough on access-related issues.

24. The United Nations estimates that, as at February 2018, 413,920 people were living in eight areas under siege, compared with 417,566 in December 2017. The Bayt Jinn enclave, with a population of 3,646, in Rif Dimashq Governorate, has been removed from the list of besieged locations, given that a local agreement was reached in late December. The enclave remains on the list of hard-to-reach areas as humanitarian access and the freedom of movement of civilians remain constrained. An area is considered by the United Nations to be besieged when it is surrounded by armed actors, with the sustained effect that civilians, the sick and the wounded cannot regularly leave and humanitarian assistance cannot regularly enter. Of the eight besieged locations, five (accounting for 95 per cent of the total besieged population) are besieged by government forces, one (3 per cent of the total besieged population) is besieged by both government forces and non-State armed opposition groups and two (2 per cent of the total besieged population) are besieged by non-State armed opposition groups. In addition, it is estimated that some 1.9 million people are living in hard-to-reach locations. That figure represents a decrease compared with the previous estimate of 2.49 million, mainly as a result of access improvements in Rif Dimashq Governorate, in particular around Tall, in north-eastern parts of the country, notably rural areas around Raqqah, and in some subdistricts in Hasakah and Dayr al-Zawr.

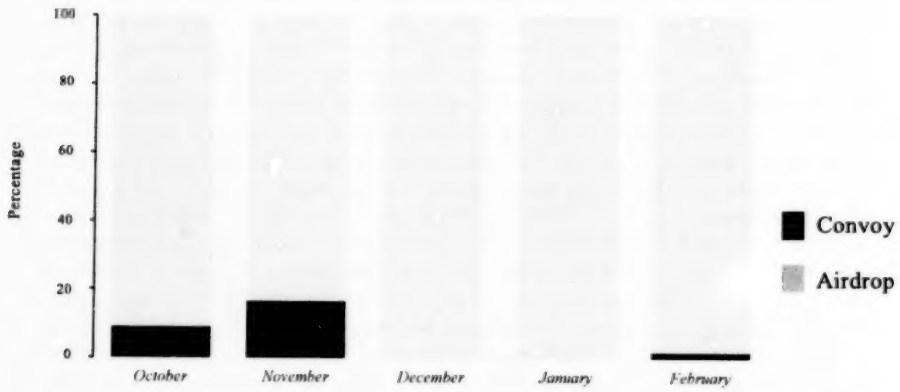
25. Under the United Nations inter-agency convoy plan for January and February, access was requested to 26 locations in besieged and hard-to-reach areas, with the objective of reaching 844,720 people. Convoys are prepared for areas with multisectoral needs where access is limited, to ensure that United Nations support is based on needs. Only one convoy was able to deploy, to Nashabiyah, eastern Ghutah, with assistance for 7,200 people (see table 1). The total number of people reached under the plan for January-February was 7,200, or 0.8 per cent of the total number of people to whom access had originally been requested. This number does not include convoys carrying supplies delivered by other humanitarian actors.

Table 1
Inter-agency cross-line humanitarian convoys, February 2018

Date	*Location*	*Requested target (number of beneficiaries)*	*Number of beneficiaries reached*	*Type of assistance*
14 February	Nashabiyah	16 500	7 200	Multisectoral

26. Individual agencies continued to submit requests for single-agency deliveries. Such deliveries are undertaken in areas in which access is less challenging through an agency's regular programming. In February, the World Food Programme (WFP) submitted 1,744 official requests to the Syrian authorities to obtain facilitation letters for the transport of food assistance to locations throughout the country, all of which were approved. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) submitted 28 requests for facilitation letters for the movement of core relief items and livelihood kits, of which 22 were approved and 6 rejected for security reasons.

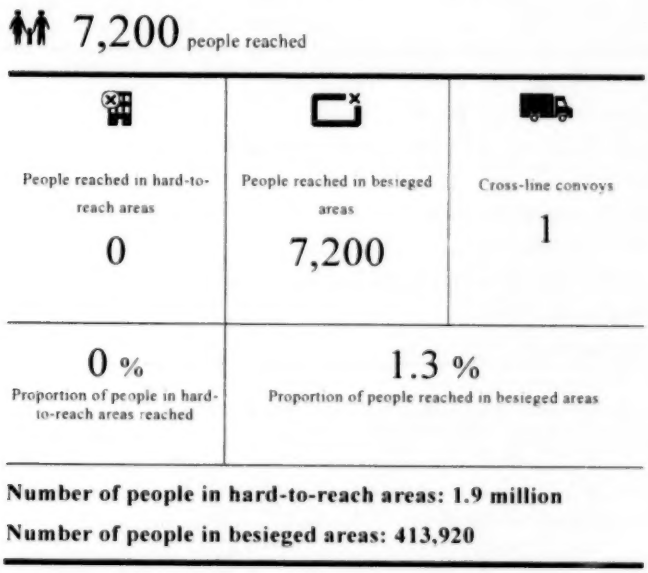
Figure II
Percentage of people reached each month in besieged areas through United Nations inter-agency cross-line humanitarian operations



27. United Nations partners continued to face response challenges in north-eastern parts of the country, owing to, among other things, administrative restrictions, pending security approvals for access to restricted areas and high levels of explosive hazard contamination. Following the suspension of non-governmental organization

activities in January 2018 owing to restrictions by the national and local authorities, which affected 25 national non-governmental organizations, an agreement was reached on 31 January to allow for the resumption of United Nations regular programming in the north-east and for some humanitarian partners to resume their work. The agreement is, however, valid only for two months and covers a limited number of partners. It is critical that all humanitarian partners be permitted to continue to provide much-needed assistance to affected people in sites for internally displaced persons and host communities without restrictions, including to deter push factors compelling the displaced to return in the absence of safe and sustainable conditions. The United Nations continued to engage with the local administration and the Governor of Hasakah to identify a long-term solution to national non-governmental organization registration issues and enable the full, unhindered resumption of humanitarian activities in the north-east.

Figure III
Inter-agency cross-line humanitarian operations, February 2018



28. Life-saving and life-sustaining medical items sufficient for 3,810 treatments were rejected or removed from inter-agency convoys by the Syrian authorities, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). Details regarding the treatments and supplies removed are shown in table 2. Additional medical supplies were scheduled to be delivered as part of the inter-agency convoy plan; however, only one inter-agency convoy was able to proceed in February.

Table 2
Medical supplies removed from humanitarian convoys, February 2018

Location	*Number of treatments*	*Types of supplies*
Nashabiyah	3 810	Syringes, IV catheter, sterile surgical gloves, anesthetics, adrenaline, anti-asthma medicines

Humanitarian response

29. United Nations humanitarian agencies and partners reached millions of people in need through all available access modalities, including regular programming from within the Syrian Arab Republic, whereby humanitarian deliveries reach those in need without crossing conflict lines; cross-line convoys, whereby assistance from within the country is delivered across conflict lines; and cross-border deliveries, whereby assistance is provided to those in need from Jordan and Turkey (see tables 3 and 4). In addition to the United Nations and its partners, non-governmental organizations continued to deliver life-saving assistance to people in need. Local authorities in many areas controlled by non-State armed opposition groups also continued to provide services where possible.

Table 3
People reached by the United Nations and other organizations through all modalities, February 2018

Organization	*Number of people reached*
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	60 000
International Organization for Migration	32 760
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	2 747 460
United Nations Children's Fund	1 500 000
United Nations Development Programme	256 534
United Nations Population Fund	57 000
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East	247 480
World Food Programme	2 703 725
World Health Organization	1 321 068

30. Cross-border deliveries continued from Turkey and Jordan under the terms of resolutions 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016) and 2393 (2017) (see figure IV). In line with those resolutions, the United Nations notified the Syrian authorities in advance of each shipment, including of its content, destination and number of beneficiaries expected to be reached.

31. Since cross-border operations began in July 2014, following the adoption of resolution 2165 (2014), the United Nations has conducted more than 752 cross-border consignments, with more than 19,124 trucks (13,037 by way of Bab al-Hawa and 1,941 by way of Bab al-Salam from Turkey and 4,146 by way of Ramtha from Jordan). These operations complement the aid provided by international and Syrian non-governmental organizations that provide services to millions more from neighbouring countries.

32. The United Nations and its implementing partners delivered food assistance to more than 650,000 people through cross-border deliveries from Turkey and Jordan (see table 4). Moreover, the United Nations conducted health and medical deliveries, providing more than 77,000 treatments through the cross-border mechanism. In the northern part of the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) delivered winter kits, child protection assistance, nutrition, education, health and water, sanitation and hygiene supplies in four shipments. Winter clothes and blankets benefited 5,000 and 25,000 children, respectively. Child protection

supplies, including recreation kits, benefited 40,500 children. Nutrition supplies, including high-energy biscuits and micronutrients, served 39,725 women and children. Education supplies, including school bags and school-in-a-box supplies, served 50,500 children. Health supplies, including essential medicines and equipment, benefited 35,000 people, while water, sanitation and hygiene supplies, including family hygiene kits and water purification tablets, served 32,500 people. In the Governorates of Dar'a and Qunaytirah, water and sanitation and nutrition supplies were delivered in two trans-shipments. Water disinfectants served 475,000 beneficiaries, while nutrition supplies, including micronutrients and high-energy biscuits, benefited more than 27,000 people.

33. Moreover, as part of the second phase of the polio outbreak response, WHO and UNICEF, together with the Ministry of Health, conducted an inactivated polio vaccine immunization round that successfully concluded in Damascus and Hasakah Governorates, parts of Aleppo Governorate and the Jaramana district of Rif Dimashq Governorate. A total of 233,518 children between 2 and 23 months of age received the vaccine, representing 71 per cent of the estimated target of 330,000 children.

34. The first round of cash assistance in 2018 was launched by UNRWA on 14 January, targeting up to 418,000 Palestine refugees in need. In February, 186,167 beneficiaries (52,405 families) received cash assistance covering two months, for a total of $64 million. In addition, UNRWA launched its first round of food assistance for special hardship cases in January. In February, 4,378 people (1,440 families) received 2,808 food parcels.

35. In the framework of its winterization programme, as at 26 February, UNHCR had distributed more than 1.7 million winterized core relief items, including high thermal blankets, extra plastic sheeting and winter clothes kits, to more than 1 million people in Dayr al-Zawr, Raqqah, Hasakah, Qunaytirah, Hama, Homs, Aleppo, Suwayda', Ladhiqiyah, Tartus, Dar'a, Damascus and Rif Dimashq Governorates. UNHCR and its partners also continued to enhance the response to the protection needs of internally displaced persons, returnees and other crisis-affected populations. To that end, 4,088 protection interventions were conducted, reaching 65,871 beneficiaries, comprising 54,261 people through general protection activities, 1,527 through child protection activities and 10,083 through more than 400 awareness-raising campaigns on prevention and response activities in relation to sexual and gender-based violence throughout 12 governorates. The United Nations Population Fund reached 294,723 people with reproductive health and sexual and gender-based violence response activities.

36. The United Nations Monitoring Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic continued its operations, monitoring 499 trucks in 17 consignments by six United Nations entities, confirming the humanitarian nature of each and notifying the Syrian authorities after each shipment. The United Nations provides 48-hour notice to the Government for all shipments. Once in the country, United Nations partners ensure that shipments arrive at the designated warehouses. Independent third-party companies contracted by the United Nations ensure independent verification of the assistance arriving at the warehouses and also monitor the distribution and/or service provision. The Mechanism continued to benefit from the excellent cooperation of the Governments of Jordan and Turkey.

Figure IV
Number of beneficiaries targeted by the United Nations and its partners by cluster through cross-border humanitarian deliveries, February 2018

(Thousands)

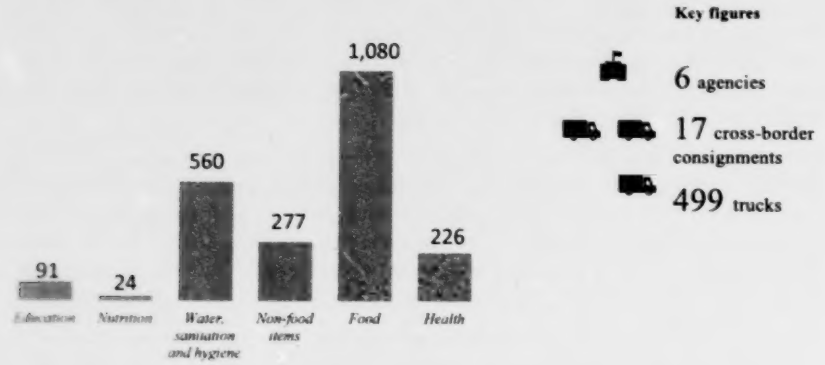


Table 4
Number of beneficiaries targeted through cross-border deliveries by sector and by district, February 2018

Governorate	District	Education	Food	Health	Non-food items	Nutrition	Water, sanitation and hygiene
Aleppo	Bab	–	–	2 500	–	–	2 500
Aleppo	I'zaz	64 170	138 875	–	–	–	39 960
Aleppo	Jarabulus	1 105	–	14 973	–	–	5 000
Aleppo	Jabal Sim'an	17 000	87 850	–	18 000	–	12 000
Dar'a	Sanamayn	–	18 075	38 000	–	2 082	–
Dar'a	Dar'a	–	145 522	243 387	–	10 757	–
Dar'a	Izra'	–	60139	115 470	–	–	–
Hama	Suqaylibiyah	14 500	–	–	–	–	–
Hama	Muhradah	6 500	–	–	–		–
Idlib	Ma'arah	18 300	25 000	–	–	–	9,072
Idlib	Ariha	11 800	56 250	–	–	–	–
Idlib	Harim	33 500	407 140	10 000	19 990	6 275	31 439
Idlib	Idlib	24 500	106 850	–	53 026	–	474
Idlib	Jisr al-Shugur	35 000	–	62 000	–	3 450	80 000
Qunaytirah	Fiq	–	2 250	6 000	–	1 664	10 200
Qunaytirah	Qunaytirah	–	29 884	67 400	–	–	86 465
Suwayda'	Suwayda'	–	1 685	–	–	–	–

37. The Russian Federation sent information bulletins to the United Nations from the Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic, which outlined the provision of bilateral relief assistance. Other Member States also continued to provide bilateral and other forms of humanitarian assistance.

Visas and registrations

38. A total of 80 new United Nations visa requests were submitted to the Government in February. Of those, 50 were approved, 28 remain pending and 2 were rejected. Of the 80 new visa applications submitted in December 2017 and January 2018, 56 were approved by February, while 24 remain pending. A total of 55 United Nations visa renewal requests were submitted in February, of which 35 were approved and 20 remain pending. An additional 30 requests for visa renewals submitted in January were approved in February. For some United Nations entities in the Syrian Arab Republic, a significant number of staff are not in place or cannot be replaced owing to the non-issuance of visas for months, formal requests notwithstanding.

39. A total of 23 international non-governmental organizations are registered with the Government to operate in the country.

Safety and security of humanitarian personnel and premises

40. Programmes of the agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system are implemented in areas affected by frequent clashes among belligerents, air strikes, regular exchange of indirect artillery fire and asymmetric attacks. In addition, and as result of activities relating to the armed conflict, some areas of operation are highly contaminated with explosive hazards that pose an elevated risk to the implementation of United Nations activities in those areas. On 12 February, a mortar shell landed on the UNRWA Zahirah distribution centre in Damascus. Minor damage was reported.

41. Since the beginning of the conflict, dozens of humanitarian workers have been killed, including 22 staff members of the United Nations or agencies of the United Nations system, of whom 18 were UNRWA staff members, 66 staff members and volunteers of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent and 8 staff members and volunteers of the Palestine Red Crescent Society. Many staff members of international and national non-governmental organizations are also reported to have been killed.

42. A total of 27 staff members of agencies and programmes of the United Nations system (1 staff member of the United Nations Development Programme and 26 UNRWA staff members) are detained or missing.

III. Observations

43. I welcome the adoption of resolution 2401 (2018). It is true that in some areas the conflict has diminished in intensity, yet there has been no cessation of hostilities. In eastern Ghutah in particular, air strikes, shelling and ground offensives have intensified since the adoption of the resolution and claimed many hundreds of civilian lives.

44. Military escalation and the resulting increased civilian death and destruction across the Syrian Arab Republic after months of diplomatic engagement by Member States and parties to the conflict is an alarming development. It is civilians who are suffering the devastating and long-lasting consequences. I remind all parties of their obligations and responsibilities under international humanitarian and human rights law. They must respect civilians and civilian infrastructure at all times and take constant care to spare them from harm. They must also evacuate, care for and protect the wounded and sick and respect and protect medical personnel and facilities. Efforts

to combat terrorist groups designated by the Security Council do not supplant these obligations.

45. Accountability for serious violations is a requirement under international law and central to achieving sustainable peace in the Syrian Arab Republic. I reiterate my call for the situation in the country to be referred to the International Criminal Court. I also call upon all parties to the conflict, Member States, civil society and the United Nations system as a whole to cooperate fully with the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011.

46. The United Nations and its implementing partners remain focused on reaching those most in need, including the 5.6 million people considered to be in acute need. The impartial and needs-based approach means that the United Nations will continue to seek to deliver aid and to provide services to millions of people in a principled manner, regardless of their location.

47. My Special Envoy is working steadfastly towards the implementation of resolution 2254 (2015) and the pursuit of a political solution to this horrific conflict, which enters its grim eighth year in March. I ask all Member States to continue to support his efforts, notably through continuing engagement with the negotiating parties to encourage their constructive commitment to the United Nations-led intra-Syrian talks in Geneva, and to support the establishment of a constitutional committee. I continue to offer my fullest support to my Special Envoy in this pursuit.

48. Our common objective should be to alleviate and end the suffering of the Syrian people. What the Syrian people need immediately has been made abundantly clear and affirmed in resolution 2401 (2018). Civilians need a cessation of hostilities, protection, access to basic goods and services and an end to sieges. Political efforts to bring the war to an end must be accorded priority and redoubled by all parties to the conflict. If those aspects are addressed together, it is possible to alleviate and truly end the suffering of the Syrian people and bring about sustainable peace in their country.

Annex

Incidents affecting civilians recorded by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, February 2018*

Damascus and Rif Dimashq Governorates

- On 2 February, ground-based strikes hit residential areas in opposition-held Hamuriyah, reportedly injuring a boy. On the same day, two strikes hit residential areas, killing 3 civilians and injuring at least 20, including five children.
- On 4 February, ground-based strikes hit a residential area in opposition-controlled Duma, reportedly killing 6 civilians, including two women and two boys, and injuring at least 30 others, one of them a woman who died the following day.
- On 5 February, an air strike hit a residential area in opposition-held Hazzah, reportedly killing six civilians, including two girls and an ambulance driver.
- On 5 February, air strikes and ground-based strikes hit residential areas in opposition-controlled Irbin, allegedly killing five civilians, including a woman and two girls.
- On 5 February, air strikes hit a residential area in opposition-held Bayt Siwa, reportedly killing 10 civilians, including two women and two boys.
- On 6 February, air strikes hit a residential area in Hamuriyah, allegedly killing 4 civilians, including a woman and a child, and injuring at least 20 others.
- On 6 February, air strikes hit a residential area in opposition-controlled Saqba, damaging several residential buildings, and allegedly killing 3 civilians and injuring at least 15 others, including women and children.
- On 6 February, air strikes hit residential areas of opposition-held Kafr Batna, reportedly killing 6 civilians, one of them a child, and injuring at least 50 others. An air strike also hit a building hosting a kindergarten, which was partly destroyed.
- On 6 February, air strikes hit Kafr Batna, reportedly damaging the mental health care department of a medical point and hitting a medical clinic, with no reports of casualties.
- On 6 February, air strikes hit residential areas of Irbin, reportedly killing 12 civilians, including a male nurse, three women and four boys, and injuring at least 50 others. Among the 12 casualties was a family of six, allegedly killed as the building in which they were living collapsed while they were inside.

* In line with Security Council resolution 2258 (2015), the present description of developments on the ground and the incidents that occurred during the month that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has been able to corroborate relates to compliance with Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014) by all parties in the Syrian Arab Republic. The information is provided without prejudice to the work of the Task Force on the Cessation of Hostilities of the International Syria Support Group. The reporting is not a comprehensive listing of all violations of international humanitarian law and violations and abuses of international human rights law that took place in the Syrian Arab Republic during the reporting period.

- On 6 February, air strikes and ground-based strikes hit a residential area in opposition-held Zamalka, reportedly killing four civilians, including a woman and a girl.
- On 6 February, air strikes hit a medical facility in a residential area of opposition-controlled Harasta, reportedly killing the son of an aid worker in the facility and injuring seven other civilians, including an aid worker.
- On 6 February, air strikes hit residential areas of Duma, allegedly killing at least 31 civilians, including 12 women and four boys, and injuring more than 100 others, including 37 children and 27 women. Ground-based strikes then reportedly also hit those locations, injuring at least two volunteers from local rescue teams as they were providing support to civilians.
- On 6 February, air strikes hit a residential area in the vicinity of opposition-held Mudayra, allegedly killing 3 civilians, including two women, and injuring at least 25 others. A school in the area, which was unoccupied at the time, was damaged.
- On 6 February, air strikes hit a residential area of Misraba, reportedly killing 5 civilians, including two women and two boys, and injuring at least 40 others.
- On 6 February, ground-based strikes hit the government-held area of Homsi in Jaramana, reportedly killing two boys and injuring four civilians, including a woman.
- On 6 February, ground-based strikes hit the vicinity of a bus station in the government-controlled Bab Tuma area in the old city of Damascus, allegedly killing two civilians and injuring seven others, including an adolescent.
- On 7 February, air strikes hit residential areas of Hamuriyah, allegedly killing at least 9 civilians, including four boys, two girls and two women, and injuring at least 25 others, including women and children.
- On 7 February, air strikes hit residential areas in Bayt Siwa, reportedly killing 10 civilians, including a man, his two sons, another boy and two girls, and injuring at least 15 others, including three women and three children.
- On 7 February, air strikes and ground-based strikes hit residential areas of Duma, allegedly killing at least 19 civilians, including five women and three boys, and injuring at least 30 others.
- On 8 February, ground-based strikes hit Faysal Street in the government-held Amarah residential area of Damascus, reportedly killing a civilian.
- On 8 February, ground-based strikes hit a residential area in the government-held Assad suburb, Rif Dimashq, reportedly killing two civilians and injuring seven others, including three women.
- On 8 February, an air strike hit a residential area in Hamuriyah, reportedly killing 6 civilians, one of them a boy, and injuring at least 17 others.
- On 8 February, a series of air strikes hit residential areas of Irbin, resulting in the collapse of several residential buildings where civilians were seeking refuge in the basements. The strikes reportedly killed 26 civilians, including two women, eight boys, two girls and an aid worker, and injured at least 115 others. Numerous ground-based strikes on residential areas were also reported.

- On 8 February, air strikes followed by ground-based strikes hit residential areas in opposition-held Jisrayn, reportedly killing 16 civilians, including five women, two boys and a girl, and injuring at least 25 others.
- On 8 February, air strikes and ground-based strikes hit residential areas of Duma, reportedly killing 5 civilians, including a woman and a girl, and injuring at least 30 others.
- On 8 February, air strikes hit a residential area in Saqba, reportedly killing 3 civilians, including a woman and two boys, and injuring at least 12 others.
- On 8 February, air strikes hit a residential area in Harasta, reportedly in the vicinity of an education charity, killing a teacher and an adult student as they were leaving the premises.
- On 9 February, air strikes hit residential areas in Irbin, reportedly killing seven civilians and injuring at least seven others, including a woman and several children.
- On 9 February, air strikes hit residential areas of Duma, allegedly killing 5 civilians, including two girls, and injuring at least 50 others.
- On 9 February, air strikes hit a residential area of Harasta, reportedly killing six civilians, including a boy and a girl, and injuring at least six others.
- On 9 February, ground-based strikes hit a residential area of government-held Warwar in north Damascus. One hit a residential building, which allegedly caused a fire that killed two civilians and injured four others.
- On 19 February, air strikes and ground-based strikes hit a farm located in a semi-rural area of opposition-held Utaya, reportedly killing six civilians, including a mother and her children (a boy and three girls).
- On 19 February, air strikes hit a residential area in Jisrayn, reportedly killing four civilians.
- On 19 February, air strikes reportedly hit residential areas of Hamuriyah, reportedly killing at least 20 civilians, including two women, two boys and a girl, and injuring at least 35 others. Ground-based strikes allegedly hit the area both before and after the incidents.
- On 19 February, air strikes hit residential areas of Saqba, allegedly killing 13 civilians, including two women and a girl, and injuring at least 45 others.
- On 19 February, two air strikes hit residential areas of Kafr Batna, reportedly killing two civilians, one of whom was a woman, and injuring at least 30 others.
- On 19 February, air strikes and ground-based strikes hit residential areas in Misraba, reportedly killing 10 civilians, including a woman, a boy and two girls.
- On 19 February, air strikes hit residential areas in Duma, allegedly killing at least two girls and a boy and injuring at least 20 other civilians.
- On 19 February, several air strikes hit a residential area in Hazzah, reportedly killing 7 civilians, including five women and a child, and injuring at least 30 others.
- On the evening of 19 February, several medical facilities located in residential areas were reportedly hit and either partly damaged or put out of service by air strikes, including the Hayat hospital located in a residential area in Hazzah, the

obstetrics hospital in Saqba, a medical point in Saqba and a hospital located in a semi-rural area in Marj, where a doctor was reportedly killed and at least one patient injured.

- On 20 February, air strikes hit a residential area in Bayt Siwa, reportedly killing 22 civilians, including eight women, seven children and a first responder.
- On 20 February, air strikes hit residential areas in Hamuriyah, allegedly killing 5 civilians, including a woman, an aid worker and a media worker, and injuring at least 15 others.
- On 20 February, air strikes hit a residential area in Irbin, reportedly killing seven civilians, including two boys and two girls.
- On 20 February, air strikes hit residential areas in Saqba, reportedly killing 10 civilians, including a woman, three girls and a medical worker, and injuring at least 25 others.
- On 20 February, ground-based strikes hit the vicinity of the Presidential Square in government-controlled Jaramana, reportedly killing 2 civilians, one of whom was a woman, and injuring at least 12 others.
- On 20 February, ground-based strikes hit near Abbasiyin Square in government-controlled Damascus, reportedly killing a female civilian.
- On 20 February, ground-based strikes hit in the vicinity of a school located in government-held Sha'alan, Damascus, reportedly killing three children.
- On 20 February, ground-based strikes hit the government-held area of the National Museum and reportedly killed two civilians, including a taxi driver, and injured five others.
- On 25 February, air strikes hit a hospital with surgical women's and paediatric departments in Saqba, reportedly putting it out of service and destroying some of the remaining stocks of medication.
- From the morning of 25 February, air strikes and heavy shelling hit the opposition-held town of Shaffuniyah. OHCHR received reports that toxic agents might have been released following the strikes and that several civilians, including six children, were experiencing respiratory difficulties. One of them reportedly died on the same day, and a second on 1 March.
- On 26 February, air strikes hit a residential area of Duma. One reportedly hit a residential building, which then collapsed, allegedly killing 13 civilians, including four women, six girls and a boy, who had sought shelter in the basement.
- On 26 February, air strikes reportedly hit the building of the opposition-run local council of Shaffuniyah, reportedly killing six civilians in the basement, including the council's head and two other council members. Sources on the ground allege that incendiary weapons were used

Aleppo Governorate

- On 1 February, air strikes hit a residential area of the opposition-controlled village of A'bad, in southern Aleppo, reportedly killing six civilians, including a woman and three children.

- On 2 February, air strikes around a camp for internally displaced persons on the outskirts of the village of Tall Hadiyah, in the vicinity of opposition-controlled territory in southern Aleppo, allegedly killed seven civilians, including two women and a child.

- On 19 February, ground-based strikes hit a residential area in the village of Basutah in Shirawah district, just south of Afrin, allegedly killing a 13-year-old girl and injuring at least seven other children between 7 and 14 years of age from the same family.

- On 21 February, a ground-based strike hit a street in the centre of Afrin, reportedly damaging civilian infrastructure, including the building that housed the Malak Association, which provides services for children with disabilities and orphans. Two boys inside the building were slightly injured by shattered glass. The Association reportedly hosted 12 children and seven staffers, all of whom were relocated to another building in the city.

- On 27 February, ground-based strikes hit near a moving vehicle in the village of Yalanquz, Jindayris district, allegedly killing a civilian accompanying his mother to their home in the village. The pair had earlier fled towards Afrin as a result of the fighting.

Idlib Governorate

- On 4 February, air strikes hit a residential area of opposition-controlled Kafr Nubl in Ma'arrat al-Nu'man district, reportedly killing 9 civilians, including two women and three boys (several from the same family), and injuring at least 20 others.

- On 4 February, air strikes hit a large hospital in opposition-controlled Ma'arrat al-Nu'man, allegedly causing substantial damage. The incident also reportedly injured at least five newborns and several other patients, including some wounded in an earlier incident, who displayed symptoms of suffocation. Patients had to be evacuated to nearby houses or to the hospital in Kafr Nubl.

- On 4 February, air strikes hit a residential area in opposition-held eastern Saraqib, reportedly injuring 11 civilian men, including three first responders. OHCHR spoke to a medical source who had treated the injured and who reported that the victims all presented symptoms such as suffocation, burning eyes and agitation, which he noted was consistent with exposure to toxic agents.

- On 4 February, air strikes hit a building in a residential area of opposition-controlled Wadi al-Nasim, in the south-east of the city of Idlib, allegedly killing 12 civilians, including four women and four girls (one of whom a 1-month-old infant), and injuring at least 21 others, including five women and four children.

- On 5 February, air strikes hit a surgical hospital in Kafr Nubl, reportedly resulting in extensive damage, including to the emergency room and patients' rooms, and the destruction of an ambulance parked outside the building. The patients, some of whom were brought from another hospital struck the day before, had to be evacuated.

- On 5 February, air strikes hit a primary health centre in the opposition-held village of Mardikh, Saraqib subdistrict, allegedly causing substantial damage and putting it out of service. On the same day, air strikes hit a blood bank in Saraqib, allegedly causing further material damage. The facility was previously hit and rendered inoperable on 18 January.

- On 6 February, ground-based strikes hit the Bayan camp for internally displaced persons in the opposition-controlled town of Atimah, near the border with Turkey and in the vicinity of Afrin, reportedly killing an 8-year-old girl from Raqqah and injuring seven civilians, including two girls, a boy and two women.
- On 7 February, air strikes hit a residential area in the Western neighbourhood of Ma'arrat al-Nu'man, reportedly killing 12 civilians, including a woman, and injuring at least 10 others.
- On 8 February, air strikes hit a primary health centre in the opposition-held village of Mishmishan and a nearby high school in eastern Jisr al-Shugur, allegedly killing eight civilians, including two women and four children, and injuring at least 15 others, including three first responders. The strikes reportedly damaged the school and put the medical facility out of service.
- On 8 February, air strikes hit a residential area of the opposition-controlled village of Kafr Sajnah in Khan Shaykhun, reportedly killing a woman and her child and injuring at least eight other civilians, six of them children.
- On 8 February, air strikes hit a first responder facility in Khan Shaykhun, reportedly killing three male first responders and injuring four others. The facility was damaged. In addition, a nearby hospital, understood to be out of service following a previous strike, was further damaged, with a male civilian working as a guard allegedly killed.
- On 9 February, air strikes hit residential areas of the opposition-controlled town of Has in Kafr Nubl, reportedly killing 15 civilians, including eight women and three children, two boys and a girl, and injuring at least 22 others.

Homs and Hama Governorates

- On 1 February, air strikes hit residential areas in opposition-controlled Kafr Nabudah, reportedly killing 5 civilians, including two women, and injuring at least 10 others.
- On 6 February, ground-based strikes hit residential areas in the opposition-controlled village of Sam'alil, Hulah district, reportedly killing two civilian men.
- On 9 February, ground-based strikes hit residential areas of Lataminah, reportedly injuring two civilian women.
- On 16 February, ground-based strikes hit residential areas of opposition-controlled Ghantu in Hulah, reportedly injuring at least five civilians, including a woman and two children.
- On 18 February, air strikes hit residential areas of the opposition-controlled village of Latmin in Lataminah, reportedly killing a married couple and injuring at least three other civilians.
- On 20 February, ground-based strikes hit a residential area in the opposition-controlled village of Zakah in Lataminah, reportedly killing a 6-year-old boy.

Dayr al-Zawr Governorate

- On 3 February, air strikes hit a school in the town of Bahrah (held by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)), in the eastern part of the governorate,

reportedly killing at least 40 civilians, including 12 women and 19 children, the majority of them persons displaced from Safirah in eastern Aleppo Governorate.

- On 10 February, two children were allegedly killed when explosive hazards detonated in the ISIL-controlled Jubaylah neighbourhood of Dayr al-Zawr city.
- On 17 February, a girl and boy were reportedly killed when explosive hazards detonated in the ISIL-controlled Hawi neighbourhood of Abu Hamam, in the eastern part of the governorate.
- On 20 February, air strikes hit residential areas of the ISIL-controlled town of Hajin, in the eastern part of the governorate, allegedly killing at least 16 civilians, including six women and five children from two families.
- On 23 February, three children were reportedly killed in Bahrah, in the eastern part of the governorate, when explosive hazards detonated in their house.
- On 25 February, air strikes hit a gathering of internally displaced persons in Zahrat Alluni, between the towns of Susah and Sha'fah, in the south-eastern part of the governorate, allegedly killing at least 11 civilians. The majority of those killed were persons displaced from Baghuz, in the eastern part of the governorate.

Raqqah and Hasakah Governorates

- On 15 February, a civilian was reportedly killed in the city of Raqqah when explosive hazards detonated inside his house.
- On 15 February, Kurdish forces raided the Nashwah neighbourhood in the city of Hasakah and reportedly took three civilian men from their homes for military recruitment purposes.
- On 16 February, two children were allegedly killed as a result of explosive hazards that detonated in the street in the Nawawi Mosque neighbourhood of Raqqah.
- On the night of 18 February, at least nine civilian men were allegedly taken from their homes by Kurdish forces in the Ghuwayran neighbourhood of Hasakah. Their whereabouts remain unknown.

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Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force for the period from 25 November 2017 to 23 February 2018

I. Introduction

1. The present report gives an account of the activities of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) during the period from 25 November 2017 to 23 February 2018, pursuant to the mandate contained in Security Council resolution 350 (1974) and extended in subsequent resolutions, most recently resolution 2394 (2017).

II. Situation in the area of operation and activities of the Force

2. During the reporting period, the ceasefire between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic was maintained, albeit in a volatile environment attributable to the ongoing conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic and notwithstanding a number of violations of the Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian Forces (Disengagement of Forces Agreement) of 1974, which are described below. The Syrian armed forces and non-State armed opposition groups engaged in exchanges of heavy weapons fire in the areas of separation and limitation on the Bravo side. Different armed groups, including the listed terrorist groups Jabhat Fath al-Sham (formerly the Nusrah Front)[1] and Khalid ibn al-Walid Army,[2] which pledged allegiance to Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), continued to exchange fire in the UNDOF area of operation. As underscored again by the Security Council in its resolution 2394 (2017), there should be no military activity of any kind in the area of separation.

3. In employing its best efforts to maintain the ceasefire and see that it is scrupulously observed, as prescribed in the Disengagement of Forces Agreement, UNDOF reports all breaches of the ceasefire line that it observes. All incidents of firing into the area of separation and across the ceasefire line, as well as the crossing by individuals of the ceasefire line are violations of the Disengagement of Forces

[1] In July 2016, the Nusrah Front announced that it had changed its name to Jabhat Fath al Sham and declared that it had cut ties with Al-Qaida.

[2] The merger between Yarmouk Martyrs Brigade and Harakat al Muthana was initially announced on 12 April 2016. On 24 May 2016, open sources reported that both groups were operating under the umbrella name of "Khalid ibn al-Walid Army". On 20 July 2017, the group was listed by the Security Council, pursuant to annex III of resolution 2368 (2017), as being associated with ISIL or Al-Qaida.

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Agreement. In its regular interaction with both sides, the leadership of UNDOF continued to call upon both parties to exercise restraint and prevent any miscalculations that might lead to an escalation of the situation. That was particularly the case when it responded to incidents of spillover and retaliatory fire.

4. An incident of particular concern occurred on 10 February involving an escalation of tension between the parties to the Disengagement of Forces Agreement. On that day, the Israel Defense Forces informed UNDOF that it had "intercepted an Iranian unmanned aerial vehicle launched from Syria" and that it had taken defensive action against the unmanned aerial vehicle and Syrian targets. The Israel Defense Forces also reported that one of its F-16 fighter jets had been shot down, crash-landing on Israeli territory, injuring two Israeli pilots. The senior Syrian Arab delegate informed UNDOF on 10 February of air strikes by Israeli aircraft in Homs and east of Damascus. On the same day, UNDOF observed that three rockets had been launched from the vicinity of Harrah on the Bravo side, about 10 km from United Nations observation post 54, had flown over observation posts 53 and 54 and had subsequently crossed the ceasefire line. UNDOF was not in a position to determine the exact point of impact.

5. There were several other incidents in violation of the Disengagement of Forces Agreement. On 2 December 2017, United Nations personnel at observation post 51 saw four missiles from the Alpha side (Israeli-occupied Golan) flying over the area of separation into the area of limitation on the Bravo side. Shortly thereafter, two heavy explosion impacts were observed on the ridgeline between Tall al Sha'r and Tall al-Bazzaq, in the area of limitation on the Bravo side. The Israel Defense Forces stated to UNDOF that it had no knowledge of the incident. On 1 February, United Nations personnel observed two fighter jets from the Alpha side flying over the ceasefire line and observation post 54, and across the area of separation into the area of limitation. A short time later, heavy explosions were heard approximately 14 km south-east of observation post 54, in the general vicinity of Tasil and Tall al-Jamusin the area of limitation on the Bravo side. Later the same day, United Nations personnel at observation post 54 observed two rockets fired from the Alpha side over the observation post and across the area of separation. UNDOF did not see the exact point of impact of the rocket rounds.

6. On 4 January 2018, United Nations personnel at observation post 51 observed three Israel Defense Forces soldiers, who were patrolling the ceasefire line, disembark from their vehicle and fire two flares into the area of separation. On 6 January 2018, United Nations personnel at observation post 53 saw an Israel Defense Forces soldier fire three single shots from his personal weapon into the area of separation.

7. UNDOF continued to observe, on a daily basis, the crossing of the ceasefire line by unidentified persons from the Bravo side to the Alpha side. In the vicinity of observation post 54, individuals from the Bravo side were observed regularly entering an Israel Defense Forces position on foot on the Alpha side and subsequently leaving, crossing the ceasefire line and moving towards Al Mullaqah on the Bravo side. The Israel Defense Forces had previously informed UNDOF that a hospital located adjacent to its position was providing humanitarian assistance to local civilians.

8. On Mount Hermon, instances of interaction between Israel Defense Forces personnel and individuals from the Bravo side were observed by UNDOF during the first half of the reporting period. UNDOF cannot confirm or verify the nature of the interactions, which typically involved unidentified individuals from the Bravo side, with unloaded mules, approaching the Israeli technical fence as well as Israel Defense Forces positions and subsequently returning to the Bravo side with loaded mules carrying unidentified supplies. On 30 November 2017, UNDOF observed persons on stretchers being handed over to Israel Defense Forces personnel.

9. The level of transborder movements through Mount Hermon of unidentified individuals crossing between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic decreased during the reporting period.

10. In the context of the ongoing Syrian conflict, the northern part of the areas of separation and limitation saw fighting of medium- to high-level intensity, in particular during November and December 2017, between the Syrian armed forces supported by pro-Government forces and armed groups in the Bayt Jinn pocket area, which consists of the towns of Bayt Jinn, Mazra'at Bayt Jinn and Mughur al-Mir, following an attack by the former in September 2017. A high level of military activity was observed and heard by UNDOF in the general vicinity of Bayt Jinn. On 29 November 2017, UNDOF personnel heard high explosives in the area. On 1 December 2017, UNDOF personnel observed an Mi-24 helicopter with its engines on fire, flying at a high altitude, approximately 10 km south-east of their position. Subsequently, the helicopter lost altitude and exploded in mid-air. During December, UNDOF observed high explosives emanating from Bayt Jinn and the surrounding area, with approximately 1,377 heavy explosions heard on 25 December, in Camp Faouar, which is within 8 km of Bayt Jinn.

11. Throughout the reporting period, UNDOF also observed heavy and small arms fire around Hadar and the surrounding hilltops. On 26 December 2017, Syrian armed forces took control of the village of Mughur al-Mir, with open sources reporting that the end of hostilities was negotiated between the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and the armed groups in the remaining villages surrounding Bayt Jinn. The military activity subsided considerably following the regaining of the area by pro-Government forces. The fighting has since remained at a low level.

12. Fighting between armed groups and Syrian armed forces in the central parts of the areas of separation and limitation continued at medium- to low-level intensity. Throughout the reporting period, an M-46 artillery gun was observed at a firing position in the vicinity of Qunaytirah, occasionally firing north and east. On 11 December 2017, United Nations personnel at observation post 51 observed the M-46 artillery gun firing eight rounds. The precise point of impact of the artillery rounds could not be determined. Later, incoming fire was observed, presumably in response to the firing of the M-46 artillery gun. Two heavy explosions were heard impacting within 1 km north of Camp Ziouani. UNDOF was not in a position to determine the origin of the retaliatory fire. On 31 December 2017, two heavy explosions were observed in the vicinity of Qunaytirah. On 30 January 2018, UNDOF heard rounds being fired from the M-46 artillery gun in the vicinity of Qunaytirah and observed explosions occurring in the vicinity of Hamidiyah al-Jadidah. On 22 January 2018, United Nations personnel at observation post 51 observed three individuals inspecting what appeared to be a towed self-propelled artillery gun near the vacated United Nations outpost 60A, located near the southern access to the berm constructed by armed groups in 2016 inside the area of separation. The berm facilitates movement of armed groups between Hamidiyah al-Jadidah and Jubbata al-Khashab in the area of separation.

13. In the southern part of the areas of separation and limitation on the Bravo side, which remain for the most part under the control of non-State armed groups, including those listed by the Security Council as terrorist groups, fighting continued between armed groups, especially the Khalid ibn al-Walid Army, on one side, and the Free Syrian Army and Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham, on the other. According to open sources, intermittent fighting continued around the area of Tasil in the area of limitation. United Nations personnel at position 80 and observation post 54 occasionally heard heavy explosions and bursts of heavy machine gun fire from the general direction of Tasil.

14. During the reporting period, UNDOF observed the continuous presence of unidentified individuals at United Nations observation post 71, ranging from two to six individuals at the post. At times, UNDOF observed construction work taking place in the vicinity of post 71 and a number of other nearby locations on what appeared to be defensive positions. On 8 December 2018, at least 10 unidentified persons were observed carrying out construction work5 km north-east of observation post 73. On 12 December 2017, 15 individuals, equipped with a bulldozer, were carrying out construction work in the vicinity of observation post 71. On 15 December 2017, UNDOF observed two bulldozers being utilized to fortify protective locations east of temporarily vacated UNDOF position 10.

15. Throughout the reporting period, the Syrian armed forces maintained positions in the area of separation, in particular in the vicinity of Ba'th and Khan Arnabah, as well as along the main road connecting Qunaytirah to Damascus.

16. The military violations on the Alpha side included approximately 90 reports of the presence of 155-mm artillery, as well as Iron Dome systems and missile carriers within the 25 km zone of the area of limitation, which are considered unauthorized military equipment in the area of limitation pursuant to the terms of the Disengagement of Forces Agreement.

17. UNDOF protested all violations of the Disengagement of Forces Agreement that it observed to both parties, including the crossing of the ceasefire line by civilians from the Bravo side, the presence of unauthorized equipment and armed individuals in the area of separation, as well as firing into the area of separation and across the ceasefire line.

18. During the reporting period, UNDOF observed several locations where approximately 550 tents and other structures appeared to have been set up for internally displaced persons in the area of separation and in its vicinity. The number of people in the camps could not be ascertained and appeared to fluctuate. Owing to the closure of the established crossing point at Qunaytirah between the Alpha and Bravo sides since late August 2014, UNDOF remains unable to facilitate, in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross, humanitarian crossings, including for students, between the two sides.

19. Since its temporary relocation from a number of positions in September 2014, and pending its full return to the area of separation, UNDOF has continued to maintain visibility, albeit limited, of the area of separation and the ceasefire line from its positions on Mount Hermon, Camp Faouar, position 80, in the southern part of the area of separation, and position 22 on the Alpha side. UNDOF operations continued to be supported by United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) military observers in Observer Group Golan, who are under the operational control of UNDOF and have maintained five fixed and four temporary observation posts along the ceasefire line, as well as four temporary observation posts on Mount Hermon. The focus of the activities of Observer Group Golan is on continuous static observation and situational awareness. The occupation by Observer Group Golan of observation posts on Mount Hermon was suspended on 3 December 2017 with the onset of winter and will resume in the spring.

20. Through Observer Group Golan, UNDOF continued to carry out fortnightly inspections of equipment and force levels in the area of limitation on the Alpha side. Liaison officers from the Alpha side accompanied the inspection teams. Inspections in the area of limitation on the Bravo side remained suspended because of the security situation.

21. Engagement between UNDOF and the Israel Defense Forces continued to endeavour to address restrictions of movement and access to United Nations positions

in the area of separation and to reduce delays and challenges experienced by United Nations personnel in crossing through the technical fence to observation posts and positions. The Head of Mission and Force Commander of UNDOF continued to remind the parties of their obligation to scrupulously abide by the terms of the Disengagement of Forces Agreement, to ensure the safety and security of United Nations personnel on the ground and to extend all cooperation to UNDOF in the fulfilment of the tasks under its mandate.

22. UNDOF, in consultation with both parties, continued to review the situation in the area of separation in order to assess whether the conditions on the ground permitted the return to vacated positions in the area of separation. In that regard, UNDOF conducted assessment visits and continuously monitored the prevailing security situation in the area of separation, mainly in the vicinity of United Nations observation posts 52, 56, 71 and 72, and positions 10, 16 and 32.

23. During the reporting period, UNDOF made progress towards the limited return to Bravo side operations, in line with the phased UNDOF plan. Following the completion of phase 1 of the plan re-establishing on 14 November 2016 the presence of UNDOF at Camp Faouar, UNDOF continued to develop the infrastructure and steadily improve the living conditions at the camp. The security and defence of the Camp have been continuously practised, and all deployed elements have been integrated into a cohesive and effective component, with clear command and control mechanisms.

24. Following the deployment of the UNDOF mechanized infantry company from Nepal to Camp Faouar at the end of September 2017, UNDOF activated phase 2 of the plan to return to vacated positions in the area of separation. Phase 2 involves, over a period of six to eight months, a resumption of limited patrolling in the northern part of the areas of separation and limitation. In line with the plan, the mechanized infantry company commenced, on 8 February 2018, limited protected patrolling from Camp Faouar to Jaba, Khan Arnabah, Mount Hermon and Ya'fur. The limited patrolling was suspended on 10 February owing to the security situation and resumed on 14 February. A comprehensive, considered and cautious approach to UNDOF limited patrolling has been adopted. UNDOF implemented a range of force protection measures to mitigate risks to personnel conducting the limited patrolling.

25. Phase 2 of the UNDOF plan also includes the refurbishment of facilities and security infrastructure of select observation posts in the area of separation, with a view to reoccupying observation posts 56, 71 and 72 in phase 3 of the incremental return to the Bravo side operations, conditions permitting. The UNDOF Joint Operations Centre will also commence its relocation to Camp Faouar during phase 2. The return of the UNDOF temporary headquarters from Ya'fur, Damascus, and of the Force Reserve Company from Camp Ziouani to Camp Faouar is also planned to take place during phase 3. Observer Group Golan will not be deployed at observation posts on a permanent basis until such time as the security conditions permit and adequate accommodation and appropriate force protection measures are in place.

26. In accordance with the provisions of resolution 2394 (2017), and the UNDOF operational concept, UNDOF continued its efforts to deploy appropriate technology to ensure the safety and security of UNDOF personnel and equipment. A surveillance trailer was deployed on the Alpha side to Camp Ziouani and position 22, while another was deployed to Camp Faouar. Additional surveillance trailers are expected to be deployed in other United Nations posts. In addition, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations continued to engage with the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and the Government of Israel regarding "the sense and warn" system, the technical specifications of which were shared with the parties in July 2017. The responses of

the parties remain pending. The Security Council will continue to be updated as necessary on progress made and challenges encountered in this respect.

27. UNDOF continued to resupply its positions on Mount Hermon and Camp Faouar from Damascus. UNDOF convoys between Damascus and the United Nations positions were conducted almost daily, using main supply route 7 and the Salam highway, with a UNDOF security escort, accompanied by a liaison officer from the office of the senior Syrian Arab delegate. UNDOF continuously monitors the situation and takes the necessary precautionary measures in planning and conducting its convoys along main supply route 7 and the Salam highway. UNDOF continued to conduct and update its contingency planning for the reinforcement and evacuation of United Nations positions and observation posts on both the Alpha and Bravo sides, as well as in Damascus. UNDOF, through its Force Reserve Company, conducted regular rehearsals, exercises and training for identified contingencies. The implementation of risk mitigation measures, including force protection measures recommended in the military capability study of UNDOF, continued to be developed at the observation posts, positions and operational bases at Camp Ziouani and Camp Faouar.

28. UNDOF continued to follow closely the developments related to the de-escalation zone in the south-west part of the Syrian Arab Republic, which was established in accordance with an agreement reached on 9 July 2017 between Jordan, the Russian Federation and the United States of America. Given the partial overlap between the de-escalation zone and the UNDOF area of operation. UNDOF maintained contact with relevant interlocutors to seek clarity with regard to arrangements envisaged under the agreement and their potential implications for UNDOF. The continuation of these contacts is particularly important in facilitating the implementation of the UNDOF mandate and in ensuring the freedom of movement of the Force, as well as the safety and security of United Nations personnel.

29. As at 26 February 2018, UNDOF comprised 982 troops, including 42 women. Troops are currently deployed from Bhutan (3), Czechia (3), Ghana (2), Fiji (299), Finland (2), India 199), Ireland (135), Nepal (337) and the Netherlands (2). In addition, 70 military observers from UNTSO/ Observer Group Golan, including 8 women, assisted UNDOF in carrying out its tasks.

III. Implementation of Security Council resolution 338 (1973)

30. In its resolution 2394 (2017), the Security Council called upon the parties concerned to immediately implement its resolution 338 (1973), decided to renew the mandate of UNDOF for a further period of six months until 30 June 2018 and requested the Secretary-General to report every 90 days on developments in the situation and the measures taken to implement resolution 338 (1973). The search for a peaceful settlement in the Middle East, in particular the efforts made at various levels to implement resolution 338 (1973), is addressed in my report on the situation in the Middle East (A/72/333), submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 71/24 on the Syrian Golan and 71/25 on Jerusalem.

31. Since the discontinuation of indirect peace talks in December 2008, there have been no negotiations between the parties. The Syrian conflict is further reducing the prospects for their resumption and for progress towards peace between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic. I look forward to a peaceful resolution of the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic and the resumption of efforts towards a comprehensive, just and durable peace settlement, as called for by the Security Council in its resolution 338 (1973) and other relevant resolutions.

IV. Observations

32. I am gravely concerned about the escalation of tension between the parties to the Disengagement of Forces Agreement, as shown by the events of 10 February. I also note with concern the continued military activities in the areas of separation and limitation on the Bravo side and incidents involving the firing of rockets and missiles from the Alpha side and rockets from the Bravo side across the ceasefire line. These developments jeopardize the Disengagement of Forces Agreement. I urge the parties to exercise maximum restraint. I encourage members of the Security Council to support efforts to sensitize both parties and regional stakeholders to the risks of escalation and the need to preserve the long-standing ceasefire between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic.

33. It remains critical that the parties maintain their liaison with UNDOF, in the first instance, to prevent any escalation of the situation across the ceasefire line. The United Nations will maintain its efforts to ensure that the long-standing ceasefire between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic continues to hold.

34. I remain gravely concerned about the prevailing security situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, its impact on the Syrian population and its implications for the stability of the region. On the Bravo side, the continued presence of and fighting between the Syrian armed forces and armed groups, including listed terrorist groups, such as Jabhat Fath al-Sham, and ISIL affiliates, such as Khalid ibn al-Walid Army, in the UNDOF area of operation jeopardize the long-term ceasefire between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic and continue to significantly affect UNDOF mandate implementation and the UNDOF area of operation.

35. There should be no military forces in the area of separation other than those of UNDOF. I urge all parties to the Syrian conflict to cease military actions throughout the country, including in the UNDOF area of operation, and to remove all military equipment and armed personnel from the area of separation.

36. Interaction and perceived interaction between the Israel Defense Forces and unidentified individuals from the Bravo side have the potential to lead to clashes between armed elements and the Syrian armed forces. I reiterate my call to both parties to the Disengagement of Forces Agreement regarding the requirement to maintain stability in the area. All military activities in the area of separation conducted by any actor pose a risk to the ceasefire and to the local civilian population, in addition to United Nations personnel on the ground. I call upon all parties to take all measures necessary to protect civilians.

37. The Israel Defense Forces should refrain from firing across the ceasefire line. The firing by the Israel Defense Forces across the ceasefire line has the potential to escalate tensions between the two sides. The continued presence of unauthorized weapons and equipment in the area of limitation on the Alpha side is also of concern.

38. As UNDOF continues to consolidate its presence at Camp Faouar and maintain its efforts to intensify its operations in the area of separation, it remains critical that the safety and security of United Nations personnel be assured. The circumstances under which the troops and military observers are operating remain complex and challenging, and require continued vigilance and risk mitigation measures. I renew my call on the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to fulfil its primary responsibility for the safety and security of United Nations personnel on the Bravo side. I also renew my call upon countries with influence to strongly and urgently convey to the armed groups in the UNDOF area of operation the imperative to cease any action in violation of the Disengagement of Forces Agreement, including actions

that jeopardize the safety and security of United Nations personnel, and to enable UNDOF to carry out its mandate safely and securely.

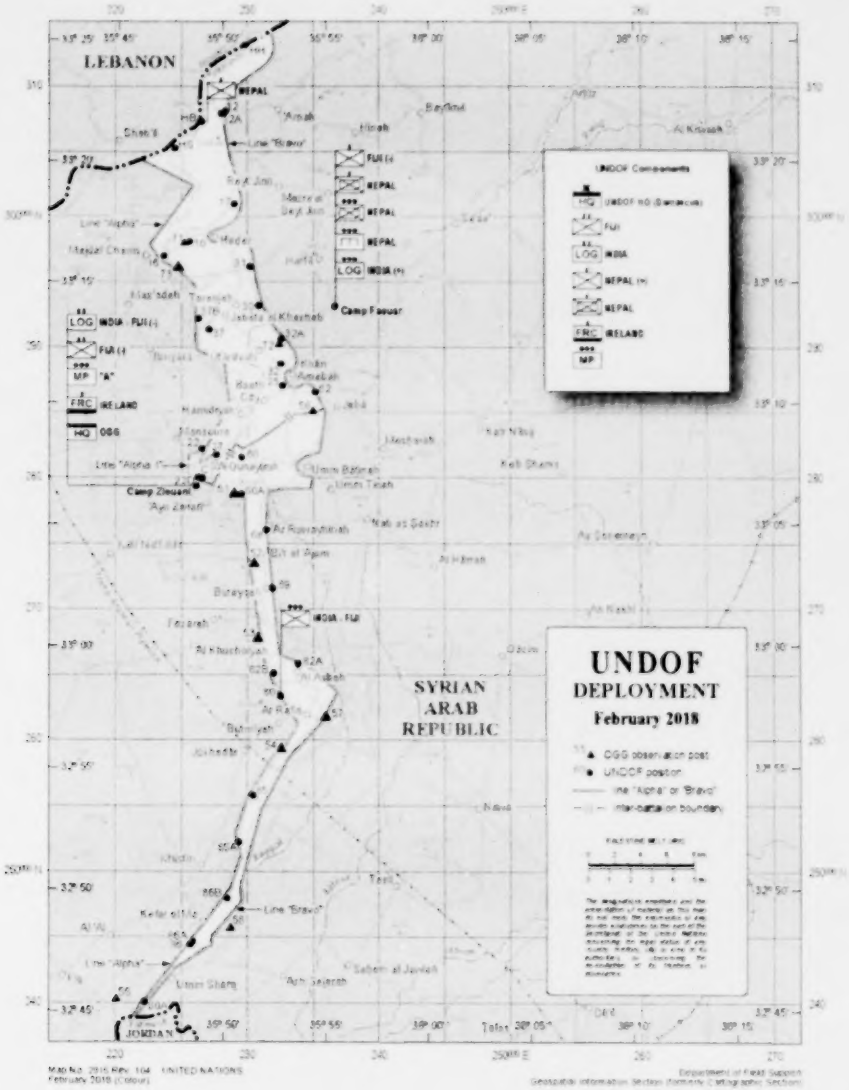
39. Both Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic have stated their continued commitment to the Disengagement of Forces Agreement and support for the presence of UNDOF in calling for a return to vacated positions in the area of separation. The full return of UNDOF to the area of separation remains a priority for the mission, conditions permitting. The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix, visited UNDOF, and also met with Israeli and Syrian officials at the end of February 2018, including on mandate implementation and the ongoing gradual return of the mission to the Bravo side.

40. I count on the continued cooperation of both parties to assist the mission in advancing its plans for the incremental return to operations and positions in the area of separation and to ensure that it can implement its mandate. As a matter of priority, the deployment of technology and equipment necessary to enhance UNDOF observation of the area of separation and the ceasefire line, while also augmenting UNDOF force protection, remains critical. In this regard, the support and cooperation of both Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic is essential.

41. It is equally important that the Security Council continue to bring to bear its influence on the parties concerned to ensure that UNDOF is accorded the ability to operate in a safe and secure manner and is allowed to operate freely in accordance with the Disengagement of Forces Agreement. As long as the area of separation remains militarized and the presence of armed groups and/or Syrian armed forces continues, UNDOF will only fulfil its mandate in a limited manner. It is essential that this issue be addressed by the parties to the Disengagement of Forces Agreement and in the wider framework of the Syrian political process. Furthermore, the reopening of the regular Qunaytirah crossing point would benefit the ability of UNDOF to implement its mandate. It is also necessary for UNDOF to continue to have at its disposal all means and resources necessary for it to return fully to the area of separation, conditions permitting.

42. The confidence and commitment of troop-contributing-countries with respect to UNDOF remains a key factor in the mission's ability to carry out its mandate. I continue to count on the support of troop-contributing-countries as UNDOF proceeds with its agreed plan for increased operations in the area of separation. I am grateful to the Governments of Bhutan, Czechia, Fiji, Finland, India, Ireland, Ghana, Nepal and the Netherlands for their contributions, their commitment, their resolve and their consummate professionalism. I am also thankful to the Member States contributing military observers to UNTSO.

43. In conclusion, I wish to express my appreciation to the Head of Mission and Force Commander, Major General Francis Vib-Sanziri, and to the military and civilian personnel serving under his leadership in UNDOF and the military observers in Observer Group Golan, who continue to perform the important tasks assigned to them by the Security Council with efficiency and commitment, under extremely challenging circumstances.


LEBANON
SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC
JORDAN
UNDOF
DEPLOYMENT
February 2018
UNDOF Components
Camp Faouar
Camp Ziouani
Line "Alpha"
Line "Bravo"
Map No. 2918 Rev. 104 UNITED NATIONS
February 2018 (Colour)
Department of Field Support
Geospatial Information Section (formerly Cartographic Section)